



MARINE SCIENCE MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL OF SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT

130 Shennecossett Road ☞ Groton, CT 06340

860.446.9380 ☞ Fax: 860.446.9381

www.marinesciencemagnet.org

Nicholas Spera, Ed. D

Principal

nspera@marinesciencemagnet.org

Kelsey Iovino

School Counselor

kiovino@marinesciencemagnet.org

Good afternoon, my name is Dr. Nicholas Spera, Principal of the Marine Science Magnet High School of Southeastern CT (MSMHS) located in Groton, CT and operated by LEARN. I am here today representing our students, parents, and teachers of MSMHS and the other school-based aquaculture programs located in places like Bridgeport, New Haven, and Ledyard.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding Raised Bill No. 5447 - *AN ACT CONCERNING AQUATIC ANIMALS AS FOOD*. I would also like to thank and acknowledge Senator Maynard for his hard work and understanding of the Marine Science Magnet High School's curriculum and mission. The legislation before you today represents the collaborative efforts of many, including my students and staff at MSMHS, as well as David Carey, Director of the Bureau of Aquaculture and Laboratory Services that resides under the Department of Agriculture.

As stated on the Department's website, according to the World Wildlife Fund, aquaculture is the fastest growing form of food production in the world. For those in the room who may not know, aquaculture is the science, art, and business of cultivating marine or freshwater food fish or shellfish, such as oysters, clams, salmon, and trout, under controlled conditions. Governor Malloy has recently spoken of the need to expand aquaculture in our state with the idea of converting abandoned warehouses into productive fish-growing facilities.

At MSMHS, we have a state of the art aquaculture lab and faculty that provide students with the skills and experience necessary to become leaders in aquaculture, as well as the broader fields of business, mathematics, and science. Our facility is an indoor Recirculating Aquaculture System, meaning that we recycle 100% of the water used. We have the capabilities to recreate any body of water throughout the world which allows us the ability to farm a significant number of different species.

Currently, we are cultivating Nile Tilapia and Rainbow Trout at the school. Within the next few months, students will also begin cultivating shellfish in school-owned beds in Long Island Sound. This real-world curriculum provides exemplary preparation for future employment and an additional source of locally grown food to the community. Moreover, this allows students the opportunity to foster real world experiences in developing business and marketing plans, maintaining water quality to sustain aquatic life, and managing and preparing fish and shellfish for restaurants and fish markets.

The mission of Marine Science Magnet High School is to prepare students for higher education and marine-related employment by addressing a wide range of marine-related topics and disciplines with a challenging, experiential curriculum responsive to the diverse interests of a broad spectrum of students.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to speak about the importance of this proposed legislation. This necessary legislation will allow students the ability to market the aquatic plants and animals that we grow in our aquaculture lab. Furthermore, this legislation enables us to fulfill the mission of the school, which is to prepare students for higher education and marine-related employment. On behalf of the students, parents, and faculty of MSMHS, I ask that you please pass this legislation. This legislation will provide the students with the hands-on learning experience and skills that will equip them with the knowledge to become future leaders in business and aquaculture in the state of Connecticut.